

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:
  - facilitating specification of a plurality of models that forecast revenues for a plurality of marketing options based at least in part on a plurality of positions occupied by the marketing options in a selected one of on-line query answer sets and contextual advertisements; and
  - determining a bidding strategy for the positions for the plurality of marketing options.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises creating the plurality of models.
3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the models comprise click models for the marketing options that forecast number of clicks for the marketing options for the various positions.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the models comprise revenue models for the marketing options that forecast revenues for the marketing options based on click conversions.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the on-line query answer sets comprises on-line query answer sets of different search engines.
6. The method according to claim 1, wherein said determining comprises solving an objective function.
7. The method according to claim 6, wherein said solving comprises solving an object function selected from a group of objective functions including
  - a first objective function to maximize number of clicks for the marketing options, and

- a second objective function to minimize average cost per click for the marketing options.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the group of objective functions further include at least one of

- a third objective function to minimize the average cost per customer for the products or services of the marketing options,

- a fourth objective function to maximize revenue for the products or services of the marketing options,

- a fifth objective function to maximize profit for the products or services of the marketing options;

- a sixth objective function to minimize marketing expenses for the marketing options; and

- a seventh objective function to maximize a number of increases in customer sign-ups or registrations for products or services of the marketing options.

9. The method according to claim 6, wherein said solving comprises solving the objective function subject to one or more constraints.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the one or more constraints include a constraint requiring a traffic level for a URL for a period of time.

11. The method according to claim 9, wherein the one or more constraints include a constraint requiring a marketing option to be at a selected one of a particular on-line query answer set position, and a particular contextual advertisement position.

12. The method according to claim 9, wherein the one or more constraints include at least one of a constraint requiring a cost limit for average cost per customer, a constraint requiring a cost limit for the marketing options, and a constraint

requiring a limit on an amount of revenue generated by products or services of the marketing options.

13. The method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises bidding for the positions for the plurality of marketing options based at least in part on the determined bidding strategy.

14. A computer readable medium comprising:

- a storage medium; and
- a plurality of executable instructions designed to program a computing

device to enable the computing device to

facilitate specification of a plurality of models that forecast revenues for a plurality of marketing options based at least in part on a plurality of positions occupied by the marketing options in a selected one of on-line query answer sets and contextual advertisements, and determine a bidding strategy for the positions for the plurality of marketing options.

15. The computer readable medium according to claim 14, wherein the models comprise click models for the marketing options that forecast number of clicks for the marketing options for the various positions.

16. The computer readable medium according to claim 14, wherein the models comprise revenue models for the marketing options that forecast revenues for the marketing options based on click conversions.

17. The computer readable medium according to claim 14, wherein the on-line query answer sets comprise on-line query answer sets of different search engines.

18. The computer readable medium according to claim 14, wherein the instructions are designed to perform said determining by solving an objective function.

19. The computer readable medium according to claim 14, wherein the instructions are further designed to bid for the positions for the plurality of marketing options based at least in part on the determined bidding strategy.

20. An apparatus, comprising:

- a storage medium having stored therein programming instructions designed to enable the apparatus to
  - facilitate specification of a plurality of models that forecast revenues for a plurality of marketing options based at least in part on a plurality of positions occupied by the marketing options in a selected one of on-line query answer sets and contextual advertisements, and
  - determine a bidding strategy for the positions for the plurality of marketing options; and
- at least one processor coupled to the apparatus to

21. The apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the models comprise click models for the marketing options that forecast number of clicks for the marketing options for the various positions.

22. The apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the models comprise revenue models for the marketing options that forecast revenues for the marketing options based on click conversions.

23. The apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the on-line query answer sets comprise on-line query answer sets of different search engines.

24. The apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the instructions are designed to perform said determining by solving an objective function.

25. The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the instructions are further designed to bid for the positions for the plurality of marketing options based at least in part on the determined bidding strategy.